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[By MR. CLAY.]

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House of Representatives

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS

ON THE

BILL (H. R. 28) TO INCREASE THE PAY OF ALL NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND PRIVATES IN THE ARMIES OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES.

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred a bill of the House of Representatives, No. 28, entitled "An act to increase the pay of all non-commissioned officers and privates in the army of the Confederate States," have considered the same and ask leave to report—

That, during the last session of Congress, a bill providing the same increase of pay for the non-commissioned officers and privates in the army of the Confederate States passed the House of Representatives, was sent to the Senate and was referred to the Military Committee, who reported it back with an amendment. That bill and the proposed amendment not being finally acted on by the Senate at the last session of Congress, are (according to the XVI joint rule adopted by the two Houses) still a part of the unfinished business of the Senate, entitled to precedence of bills introduced at the present session, and might have been called up for action at any time since the organization of the Senate on the 13th of January last. In consideration of these facts, the committee deemed it wholly unnecessary and superogatory to report back this bill, until the original bill (of which this is a substantial copy) was disposed of by a final vote of the Senate. However, the report of the committee having been called

for, they beg leave to state that this bill was referred to them on the 8th instant, and that, after a long and careful deliberation, they cannot bring themselves to the conclusion that it is either necessary or proper to pass the bill. It will not add to the strength or efficiency of the army. Our army is composed of citizen soldiers and not of foreign mercenaries; they are fighting not for pay or plunder, but for their country, their homes, their families, their liberties, their honor. Money cannot measure the value of these blessings or furnish compensation for their loss, or stimulate the noble passions which prompt men to die in their defence. To protect their own rights, their own property, their own altars and firesides, their own mothers, wives, daughters and sisters, our soldiers rallied to arms, and they will not lay them down until they are secure. They will encounter all perils and endure any privations and pains with cheerfulness, in behalf of objects so dear, as long as they are menaced by our rapacious and remorseless foes. They did not enlist for the poor pittance of eleven dollars per month; tenfold that sum would not indemnify them for their hazard of life, limbs and health, and cannot compensate them for their heroic sacrifices and sufferings. As they did not enlist for pay, they will not desert or serve with less zeal or energy if it is not increased. They have not asked for its increase; they know that their government has not the revenue or the resources which would enable it to pay them the wages of a substitute or hireling, fighting for others. Fighting for themselves, or for those still dearer to them, they scorn all base and selfish motives, and would repel with indignation the attribution to them of a purpose or an inclination to strike for higher wages. If they are not content with their pay, (as the committee believe) they cannot be made so by the trifling increase of four dollars per month. A sum so small and insufficient to satisfy their necessities or gratify their fancies would but mock and tantalize them, and tend to aggravate rather than allay discontent. If the Senate believe that the soldiers of our army demand more pay it will be far better to consolidate the sums of the three bills sent us by the House of Representatives, two for an increase of pay of four dollars per month, and the third to allow five dollars per month as commutation for deficiency of rations, and amend the bill by inserting thirteen instead of four dollars. This would, at least, bear the semblance of a purpose on the part of Congress to gratify their wishes, notwithstanding twenty-four dollars in Treasury notes would probably buy for them less to-day than five dollars did when they enlisted.

But this committee is fully persuaded that our soldiers neither demand nor desire higher pay than they receive. Men who have borne as they have all the privations and sufferings incident to war; who have endured the scorching heats of summer and the pinching cold of winter, the sleet, or snow, or drenching rain on the midnight watch, and the gnawings of hunger or thirst after the long march, the physical pains of wounds or sickness, and the mental anguish which the loss or absence of friends occasions, all without repining or complaining, are superior to the low and sordid souls who would weigh their own gains in the scales with the independence of their country.

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No, this increase of pay has not been asked for by the soldiers, but by friends who *loved not wisely or too well*. This measure did not originate in Congress, but in the Legislatures of the several States.

Within the first year after the fall of Fort Sumter, the Legislatures of several of the States, instructed or requested their Senators and Representatives to vote for this proposed increase of soldiers pay. When they did so, our arms had met with no serious reverse: our successes had been almost unbroken by a single disaster or defeat: the enemy had not penetrated far beyond the confines of the Confederacy: the war had not assumed or indicated its present gigantic proportions: our forces then in the field were deemed adequate to our defence: our treasury notes were equal to our best currency, and a short war and an early peace were anticipated. Since they did so, our enemies have seized many of our strongholds and a large part of our territory; have captured or destroyed most of our gun-boats, have gotten the command of many of our rivers, have pushed their armies far into the interior of our country; have closely blockaded our coast: have multiplied their forces fourfold, both by land and by sea, and have made the most formidable preparations for a long, relentless and exterminating war. They have also invoked the aid of foreign and of black mercenaries, and have endeavored to excite servile insurrection in our midst. Outrage, rapine and destruction attest their malignant, vindictive and remorseless hostility, and ruin and desolation mark the progress of their armies. They destroy whatever is valuable that they cannot appropriate. They hope and strive to achieve more by the aid of fire and famine than by the sword and the bayonet. Our fields and fences, our dwellings and granaries, our mills and gin houses, our implements of husbandry and tools of trade they consume with fire, and our slaves and beasts of burden they carry off and employ against us. They have constrained us in self-defence to increase our armies and our expenditures in proportion to their preparations for our subjugation. We are daily expending more than our weekly expenditures were when these demands for increase of pay began. We have already created a large debt, to pay the interest of which alone will require very heavy taxation, and yet are unavoidably increasing that debt at a rate which would be inexcusable and intolerable, if it were not for the sake of public liberty. We have strained our credit as far as we can without hazarding its loss, in order to raise means to support our armies and to prosecute the war for our independence. We have been compelled to multiply the issues of our treasury notes until they have become so much cheapened, and the cost of productions so much enhanced, that it now requires four times the sum that was required eighteen months since to purchase the same supplies for our army. To absorb our redundant circulation, reduce our indebtedness and provide for our defence, Congress has just passed a Tax Bill which will exact of our people in money and in kind, nearly \$200,000,000, for the current year. The condition of our country; the state of our finances; the great debt already incurred, and which must be greatly increased; the depreciation of our currency; the impoverished circumstances of those parts of our territory which may have been occupied

by the enemy; the high taxes already imposed and which must be imposed for many years to come, all admonish us that Congress should not add to the burthens of the people more than is absolutely necessary to secure their liberties.

The soldiers who are to receive this increased pay must contribute in taxes to provide it. They are tax-payers as well as warriors, and must return to the treasury the money which we are voting them. They can gain nothing by our appropriations of their money to their use, but may lose what they cannot regain, if we destroy the credit of our currency and reduce the government to bankruptcy by extravagant appropriations and excessive issues of treasury notes.

If this bill become a law, the committee think it will add from twenty to thirty millions of dollars to the annual expenditures of the government, a sum sufficient to defray all the expenses of all our State Governments for several years. But in its baneful influence upon the currency, it will probably be much more sorely felt; it will cost us perhaps more than double that sum in the depreciation of our treasury notes. In the opinion of the committee, \$100,000,000 will scarce cover what it will cost within the first year after its enactment. It may defeat all our efforts by funding our treasury notes, and by taxing our property to maintain our credit, redeem our paper issues, and meet the demands of our creditors. Our best reliance, next to our brave soldiers, is upon our credit. With soldiers and with credit we can fight on and fight forever. We cannot support armies without credit, and cannot, therefore, afford to lose it. We cannot largely increase our circulation or expenditures without destroying our credit. The committee, therefore, cannot recommend the adoption of this bill, which will, at least, endanger the credit of the government.

The committee do not believe that the proposed increase of pay will add to the comforts or supply the wants of the soldier. Although four dollars to our soldiers may make in the aggregate from two to three millions against the government, per month, it will be an inconsiderable trifle to each soldier. Four dollars would now scarcely suffice to buy a single article of clothing, or a days board, or two week's rations of tobacco. If we scatter from \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000 more in treasury notes among our armies, their consequent depreciation and the increase of prices, will render fifteen dollars of no more value to the soldier than eleven dollars is at present. The government will lose its twenty or thirty millions of dollars, to be paid for in taxes hereafter by the soldiers, and the soldier will not gain even the forty-eight dollars ostensibly advanced to him. It will prove in the end to the soldier a delusion and a snare.

If the Senate should pass all the bills sent to it by the House of Representatives, for increase of pay and commutation of rations, allowing an increase of thirteen dollars a month to each non-commissioned officer and private, and the President should approve them, the increased annual expenditures resulting therefrom, cannot be less than \$60,000,000, and may reach \$100,000,000. But can any intelligent mind doubt that such legislation would be of no benefit to the soldier,

while it would bring the government to bankruptcy. Indeed it would be a curse instead of a blessing to the soldier. It would so cheapen the treasury notes, and so enhance the cost of every product of labor, that he would not probably be able to buy half as much with his twenty dollars, as he had done with his eleven dollars. It would excite universal distrust and alarm among the capitalists of our country, would arrest all funding of our treasury notes, and all loans to the government. It would be deemed by them an act of fatuity or a crime, evincing a lack of the virtue or the ability necessary to preserve the resources and discharge the debts of the Confederacy. The soldier would gain nothing, but would probably lose by the increase of pay in the present, and would have, in the future, to bear his share of the burthens of heavy taxation, in order to pay the price of this ill-judged liberality towards himself.

At previous sessions of Congress this measure was urged mainly upon the ground of the increased price of clothing and other articles of necessity, and the inadequacy of the soldier's pay for their purchase. This reason for passing this bill no longer exists; Congress has now assumed the duty and expense of clothing the soldier. Besides, Congress has voted fifty dollars bounty to all soldiers continued in service, recruited or enlisted for the war, and has pledged those continued in service a furlough, with transportation home and back, or the commutation value in money of their transportation; thus assuming to give the soldier more than twice the proposed increase of pay for any one year, and quite as much as would be realized in pay in three years. The government is now laboring under great difficulties and at alarming cost, in order to redeem its pledges to the soldier and to provide him with the bare necessities of life.

The committee believe that a large majority of our soldiers do not need or desire any increase of their pay, that they are themselves independent in fortune, or have relatives and friends on whose assistance they can confidently rely. Of the minority who may not have property or friends on whom to rely for support, but few could use their pay advantageously while engaged in the army, unless they have families at home in need of it, to whom they could and would transmit it. If it were possible for Congress to make such discrimination as to provide increased pay only for those in need, or for their families, it might be proper to do so, not merely for their sakes, but because it would not probably require one-fourth of the sum which will be required if this bill becomes a law.

The committee are further constrained to oppose this bill by a consideration of the claims of the maimed and indigent soldiers, or the indigent families of deceased soldiers, upon the sympathy and assistance of their government. When we consider that the United States government expended from one to two millions of dollars annually in pensions, how much greater must be our expenditure if we provide for our soldiers or their families! While the soldiers of the revolution of 1776 and of subsequent wars of the United States can be told by thousands, ours must be told by hundreds of thousands; and our indigent and disabled soldiers, or indigent families of deceased soldiers

must exceed those of the United States in like proportion. Would it not be juster and wiser and more acceptable to our brave and generous soldiers to save the large sum annually required by this bill for the future support of their poor and helpless brothers in arms or the poor families of the ~~un~~fallen and ^{our} recorded dead.

These are some of the considerations which have influenced the committee in recommending that the bill do not pass. They cannot forbear adding another, which they would gladly suppress if justice to themselves, to their country and to the soldiers did not require its utterance. It is, that, in their opinion, this war will probably last for several years, and we cannot foresee our condition ere it closes. Pressed on every side by a powerful, barbarous and rapacious foe, without a friend among the powers of the earth, and compelled to work out our own deliverance through a harder ordeal than ever any people were subjected to, it seems to us the part of wisdom to "let well enough alone." Our soldiers must be armed, fed and clothed to ensure the salvation of our cause, and we are hard strained to furnish them the indispensable articles of arms, food and raiment. Let us not promise more than we can perform, or fail to achieve our independence by destroying our credit.

All of which is respectfully submitted.





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